AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A point management method that manages points that are given to a customer, comprising:

a step of confirming an expiration date of points of a giving source customer, after accepting a request for giving points from the giving source customer of points, by referring to a customer database that stores information of the number of points that the customer has and the expiration date, according to each member;

a step of accepting designation of a giving number of points and a giving destination customer from the giving source customer, in a case where the expiration date of points of the giving source customer has not passed; and[[;]]

a step of extracting information of a group to which the giving destination customer belongs and a group to which the giving source customer belongs, from a belonging database that stores information correlating a customer and a group to which the customer belongs, and permitting giving of points to the giving destination customer based on a determination that the group to which the giving destination customer belongs and the group to which the giving source customer belongs match, wherein the giving of points to the giving destination customer includes:

a step of subtracting the designated giving number of points from the number of points of the giving source customer that is stored in said customer database, and adding the giving number of points to the number of points of the giving destination customer that is stored in said customer database.

2. (Currently Amended) The point management method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a step of extracting information of a customer that belongs to the same group as the group that the giving source customer belongs, from [[a]] said belonging database that stores information, correlating a customer and a group to which the customer belongs;

a step of providing the extracted information of customers to the customer terminal of the giving source customer, as information of candidates of being the giving destination customer; and

a step of accepting a customer, selected by the giving source customer, from the candidates of the giving destination customer, as the giving destination customer.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The point management method according to claim 1, further comprising:

a step of determining whether the expiration date of points of the giving destination customer has passed, by referring to said customer database; and

a step of ~~making~~ permitting the giving of points ~~possible~~ to the giving destination customer from the giving source customer, ~~in a case where~~ based on a determination that the expiration date of the giving destination customer has not passed.

5. (Currently Amended) A management computer that is connected to a customer database that stores information of the number of points that a customer has and expiration date of the points that the customer has, correlating it with identification information of the customer, and to a belonging database that stores identification information of a customer and group identification information of the group to which said customer belongs, correlated with each other, comprising:

a request receiving unit which receives a request for giving of points, including identification information of the giving source customer, from a terminal, via a network;

an expiration date confirming unit which searches the customer database based on the identification information of the giving source customer, and confirms that the expiration date of points of the giving source member that is stored in the customer database, has not passed;

a giving content receiving unit which receives information that specifies the giving number of points and giving destination customer, from said terminal, via said network, in a case where it is confirmed that the expiration date of points of the giving source customer has not passed; and

a point number updating unit which:

extracts group identification information of the group to which the giving destination customer belongs and group identification information of the group to which the giving source customer belongs, from said belonging database,

determines whether the extracted group identification information matches or not,

permits giving of points to the giving destination customer possible based on a determination that the extracted group identification information matches, and

subtracts the giving number of points from the number of points of the giving source customer that is stored in said customer database, and adds the giving number of points to the number of points of the giving destination customer that is stored in said customer database.

6. (Currently Amended) The management computer according to claim 5, wherein, said management computer is further connected to a belonging database that stores identification information of each customer and group identification information of the group to which the customer belongs, and the customer information of each customer is further stored in said customer database, and

said giving content receiving unit:

extracts identification information of customers correlated with the same group identification information as the group identification information of the group, which the giving source customer belongs to, from said belonging database, and extracts customer information that corresponds to the identification information of the extracted customers, from said customer database;

sends the extracted customer information as information of candidates of the giving destination customer, to the terminal of the giving source customer; and

receives from said terminal, information indicating the giving destination customer, which is designated from the candidates of the giving destination customer, by the giving source customer.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) The management computer according to claim 5, wherein said point number updating unit determines whether the expiration date of points of the giving destination customer has passed or not, by referring to said customer database, and makes permits the giving of points from the giving source customer to the giving destination customer possible, in

a case where based on a determination that the expiration date of points of the giving destination customer has not passed.

9. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium that stores a program for controlling a computer to execute:

a step of receiving a request of point giving, including identification information of the giving source customer, from a terminal, via a network;

a step of searching a customer database that stores the number of points that a customer has and the expiration date, based on the identification information of the giving source customer, and confirms that the expiration date of points of the giving source customer, which is stored in the customer database, has not passed;

a step of obtaining information that specifies the giving number of points and the giving destination customer, from said terminal, via said network, in a case where it is confirmed that the expiration date of points of the giving source customer has not passed; [[and]]

a step of extracting group identification information of the group to which the giving destination customer belongs and the group identification information of the group to which the giving source customer belongs, from a belonging database that stores, correlating with each other, identification information of a customer and group identification information of the group to which the customer belongs;

a step of determining whether the extracted group identification information matches; and

a step of permitting giving of points to the giving destination customer based on a determination that the extracted group identification information matches, wherein the giving of points to the giving destination customer includes:

a step of subtracting the giving number of points from the number of points of the giving source customer, stored in the customer database, and adding the giving number of points to the number of points of the giving destination customer, stored in the customer database.

10. (Currently Amended) The computer readable recording medium according to claim 9, that stores said program for further controlling a computer to execute:

a step of extracting the identification information of the customers correlated with the same group identification information as the group identification information of the group, which the giving source customer belongs to, from [[the]] said belonging database ~~that stores the identification information of the customers and the identification information of the group to which the customer belongs, correlated with each other~~;

a step of extracting the customer information that corresponds to the extracted identification information of the customer, from the customer database that further stores customer information of each customer;

a step of sending the extracted customer information to the terminal of the giving source customer, as information of candidates of the giving destination customer; and

a step of receiving from said terminal, information indicating the giving destination customer, selected from the candidates of the giving destination customer.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) The computer readable recording medium according to claim 9, that stores said program for further controlling a computer to execute:

a step of determining whether the expiration date of the points of the giving destination customer has passed or not, by referring to the customer database; and

a step of ~~making possible~~ permitting the giving of points to the giving destination customer from the giving source customer~~, in a case where~~ based on a determination that the expiration date of points of the giving destination customer has not passed.

13. (Currently Amended) A computer data signal, embedded in a carrier wave, and representing a program for controlling a computer, which is connected to a customer database that stores correlating, the number of points that a customer has and information of expiration date with the identification information of the customer, to execute:

a step of receiving a request for giving points, including identification information of the giving source customer, from a terminal via a network;

a step of searching the customer database, based on the identification information of the giving source customer, and confirming that the expiration date of the points of the giving source customer, stored in the customer database has not passed;

a step of obtaining information that specifies the giving number of points and the giving destination customer from said terminal via said network, in a case where it is confirmed that the expiration date of the points of the giving source customer has not passed; [[and]]

a step of extracting group identification information of the group to which the giving destination customer belongs and the group identification information of the group to which the giving source customer belongs, from a belonging database that stores, correlating with each other, identification information of a customer and group identification information of the group to which the customer belongs;

a step of determining whether the extracted group identification information matches; and

a step of permitting giving of points to the giving destination customer based on a determination that the extracted group identification information matches, wherein the giving of points to the giving destination customer includes:

a step of subtracting the giving number of points from the number of points of the giving source customer, stored in the customer database, and adding the giving number of points to the number of points of the giving destination customer, stored in the customer database.